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ABSTRACT

This parent guide provides an overview of the Gesell Developmental Program (pre-first grade) in the Eastern Lancaster County School District (Pennsylvania). The following topics are covered: (1) a history of the program; (2) a brief description of the Gesell preschool tests; (3) answers to questions parents are likely to ask about the program; (4) a description of the program and its philosophy; (5) several means of communication available between parents and teachers; and (6) parent reactions to several aspects of the program. The appendices include a project letter and program evaluation questionnaire sent to parents of the participating children, a pre-first grade report card, a child observation guide and response form, a letter providing an update of the program to the parents, some class activities, and two letters initiating informal parent meetings and coffee klatches. A 12-item bibliography for parents is included. (JW)

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BY PARENTS FOR PARENTS

A Pre-First Parent's Guide To The Early Education Program
in Eastern Lancaster County School District

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BY PARENTS FOR PARENTS

A Pre-First Parent's Guide To The Early Education Program
in Eastern Lancaster County School District

Written and compiled by:

Caernarvon Pre-First Parents

"By Parents For Parents" Committee

Pat Dero
Katharine Martin
Mary Petrofske
Jean Reese
Kym Stouch

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July 1982

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INTRODUCTION

The idea for By Parents For Parents began as I watched parent after parent struggle with their child's placement in pre-first grade. A difficult concept to understand, developmental placement was often perceived as a negative or confusing assignment within the school system. Because I have come to feel so strongly about the positive aspects of the program, I undertook the task of preparing this booklet.

After project letters and questionnaires were constructed and sent to past and present P-1 parents (See Appendix I), a committee of volunteers was formed to help with the publication. Responses were compiled and organized so readers could share directly the thoughts and feelings of those parents whose children have already experienced Y-K/P-1. It is they, I feel, who can best explain the program.

Sincere thanks to all parents who have contributed to our project. Without their time and honesty, this booklet could not have become a reality.

Kathleen Hood
Pre-First Teacher

HISTORY OF PROGRAM IN ELANCO

The need for an Early Childhood Program for the Eastern Lancaster County School District was indicated by a faculty self-study conducted during the 1973-75 school years. A committee reviewed several types of programs before recommending the Gesell Developmental Program. A pilot study was conducted during the 1977-78 year with seventy-two children taking part. Parents of children participating were asked to fill out an evaluation form.

Figures showed ninety-two percent agreed children should start school based on their developmental age rather than their chronological age. Seventy-six percent said they would support their child being placed in a pre-first grade program if the child did not seem ready for a regular first grade. Twenty-four percent were opposed. Ninety-three percent recommended developmental grouping for the kindergarten program for the following year, while only seven percent were not in favor.

With all this information before them, the ELANCO School Board approved the Gesell Developmental Test, be given each child in the district before entrance into kindergarten. The Gesell Program was initiated district wide for the 1978-79 year.

Since its initiation, the program has been greatly refined. Before and after the test is given to youngsters entering kindergarten, parents meet with administrative staff, who explain the elements and purposes of the program and answer parents' questions.

Administrative and teaching staffs know parents' doubts, fears and emotional reactions pertaining to the placement of their child; therefore, they are continuously available for consultation.

...charged with driving under influence of intoxicants in Marietta last April 7, was sentenced to one year probation and directed to pay \$100 fine plus costs.

Supervisors Agree To Pay Interest

The West Cocalico Township supervisors agreed at a recent meeting to pay the interest on a sewage feasibility report done for the West Cocalico Township Sewer and Water Authority.

James K. Beard, representing the authority, requested a loan for the sum of \$1,769 from the supervisors. The supervisors agreed to pay the interest to date on the study.

The supervisors ordered the township solicitor to file suit against Chester L. Ephrata, to collect \$1,280 in fees for engineering and engineering work and water authority chased along.

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E. C.
Sewer

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Editor, New Era: I would like to direct my comments to those people in Eastern Lancaster County School

In Defense of Pre-First Teacher Defends Pre-1st Test

for the program but who might not have not yet received the PACT cries

is Do honest parents really need test results to determine the fact that their child is not ready to sit still and concentrate for 5-10 hours a day on reading, math, etc? Many of the letters were signed by concerned taxpayers when they would have been signed by parents. If the kindergarten test is your child's rights let me at the School ncester Coun-ld's rights. If program is as be in other not every benefits?

Editor, New Era: As a teacher of a Pre-First class I would like to ask questions and also ask First Teacher

FM Converter Stolen

State police report and an FM converter, \$625, were stolen from Charles Conover, a White Horse.

City police report into the announcer Conestoga and White Horse stole a public microphone value City juvenile hat they arrested connection with a football team, 22 N. Mary St. me of equipment stolen w users, 15 helr

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Conestoga
painted a c

Eastern Lancaster County taxpayers met to discuss their objections to the school board's pre-first grade program and the closing of the Union Grove School. A k

Elanco Parents Look To The Law For Angle

By CLETUS SICKLER

Intelligencer Journal Correspondent

Some 30 residents attended a gathering Thursday night at the Spot High natives

to the President's... solemn energy call arms, the ad... began, showing a man in shirtsleeves waving his arms and smiling and saying, "Come on down," followed by promises that Florida had all the gasoline a traveler could want.

The commercial also televised a toll-free number that travelers could call and ask about gasoline supplies.

And call the viewers did. "He had a grin on his face that was so infuriating, I was really ticked off and called to complain," one Chicago viewer said. In fact, the toll-free number attracted a barrage of calls.

If Florida didn't have trouble enough, tourism dropped 10 percent last month, a cutback that most experts attribute to the energy crunch.

Philadelphia Inquirer

Aug. 20. Kuhl said agenda to talk at th

ay, "there are board member ginal and easily claimed the perintendent

mistake to get ough Simon ast, "I still ed people m repent able of r some

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Class

14—The Penny Saver, November 8, 1978

Early Childhood Program

In the Spring of 1977, the Eastern Lancaster County School Board approved a request to initiate a new approach to kindergarten placement and curriculum.

The request came from a committee of classroom teachers and an elementary principal, formed as a result of an Elementary Self-Study that had been completed in the recent past.

The Board approved a proposal to begin the project on a pilot basis for September, 1977, at Summit Valley and Brecknock Schools. Later, it would be evaluated and, if proven successful, expanded to all six schools for September, 1978. It was positive reaction from parents and teachers, and is presently operating District wide.

Over the years, children have begun

differences in intelligence but rather by differences in developmental readiness.

The differences in developmental levels are seen earlier when various children of the same age crawl, talk, or take their first step at different times. Likewise, not all school age children are ready for the formal schooling process at the same time. It is important for parents to realize that a young developmental level is not an indication of low or high academic potential. It is quite conceivable for a "young" developmentally

It does mean, however, that children who enter kindergarten with a young developmental age should have an additional year of schooling in order to insure a good start and a positive experience.

success lies in providing program appropriate to child's level of reading

To identify developmental level testing instrument The Early Childhood Committee, after considerable research recommended the Testing Program. This instrument can be administered in a short setting. To administer test, some training is required. The District supported the training several reading specialists as well as a few classroom teachers.

In the summer of approximately 250 kindergarten students were tested and recommended for assignment to the appropriate Kindergarten level generally

THE GESELL TEST

The Gesell preschool tests were first published in 1928 by Dr. Arnold Gesell of the Yale Clinic of Child Development. Gesell and his associates spent much time documenting the distinctive behavioral characteristics of each age of human development. The original test, which was later refined and revised by the staff, has become a respected and accurate indicator of a child's level of maturation.

The test, which takes approximately 30 minutes, is administered by examiners who have completed an intensive workshop on the Gesell examination and child development. As the child works, the examiner evaluates the child's performance in four specific areas: (1) motor, (2) adaptive, (3) language, (4) personal/social. Because the examiner is looking for the overall pattern that emerges as the child is working, there is no one answer or behavior that determines a child's developmental age on the test.

The test does not measure a child's intelligence quotient or level of social development, as commonly thought. Rather, the test, primarily a placement tool, measures a child's school readiness. School readiness is defined by the Gesell Institute as "the ability to cope with the school environment physically, socially and emotionally, as well as academically, without undue stress, and to sustain in that environment."¹ By assessing a child's school readiness, the test determines the most comfortable placement for each child and increases his/her chances for a successful school experience.

¹Gesell Institute, A Gift of Time...A Developmental Point of View (New Haven, Connecticut: Gesell Institute, 1980), p.5.

WHAT WAS YOUR INITIAL REACTION TO YOUR CHILD BEING ASSIGNED TO YK/P1?

"I was very upset. I felt it was a step down and that my child certainly couldn't need pre-first. I felt somewhat negligent as a parent. Perhaps I didn't do enough as a parent that my child couldn't cope with first grade, much less be the brightest in the class."

Kym Stouch

"Why? What had we done wrong in her early, formative years? Was it because she had few peers around her before school age?"

Joe and Maryann Oestreich

"We wanted her in first grade."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"I wasn't sure at first what the program would really accomplish and the real reason for the program. I felt that the testing done was too hard for a 5 year old according to other tests my other daughters had taken in other school districts."

Linda Weinhold

"I didn't understand or appreciate the purpose of having both a year of kindergarten and a year of pre-first."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"I wasn't thrilled at first about her being put in Y-K, but by the time P-1 came around I knew it was best for her."

Jeanne Reese

"At first I didn't understand why. But after I started seeing how he was doing in his work he brought home and went to the conference, I could see that he needed this extra year to prepare him for future classes."

Cathy Witwer

"I had very mixed feelings. Especially because I had never heard of such a thing and had no available information about it. The first reaction of other family members was, "She's slow, stupid."

Corene Hughes

"My first reaction was that I had failed at being a good parent and that my child was dumb or slower than other children his age. I was worried about what other people were going to say when they found out my child was placed in this program. Third, I was worried about an extra year of schooling, especially since my child is a boy."

Katharine Martin

"On being told my sons were not ready for kindergarten-that there was time needed for maturity, I was not upset. I was told that if it was felt that he was misplaced, they would advance him to kindergarten. I felt that the program was explained very well."

Andrea Konzelmann

"My girls aren't normal..What had I done wrong? My girls aren't stupid! My girls aren't retarded! Father wanted to go to court to force school into placing our daughters into a normal classroom!"

Pat Dero

"I did not know anything about V-K or P-1 previously, as this was my first child in school. I was not upset that he was in V-K but that he would probably have another year in school and graduate almost at age 20. I became a teacher's aide that year and was assigned to O-K, so I got to see the other kindergarten operating."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"Panic, to the point that I could not figure what I had done wrong, while teaching my child the things I thought were standard knowings for a child at 5 years of age. Since being the district's first year in this new program, I wondered if these students were the guinea pigs for a new program the district wanted to try."

Name Withheld Upon Request

WHAT FEARS DID YOU HAVE ABOUT THE PROGRAM BEFORE YOUR CHILD BEGAN?

"1. I was afraid that P-1 would be an exact repeat of V-K. 2. I was afraid that he would feel stupid or dumb toward other children his age who were assigned to V-K."

Katharine Martin

"My girls were upset with me for some reason and just weren't trying. I did fine with my other two children! Why these two? How can I have one "gifted" child, another on a high average grading at the top of his class and now two "failures?" My God, what will the neighbors, family, and friends think?"

Pat Dero

"We had no fears."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"If she would be put down for being in the V-K group? And would she get enough discipline?"

Jean Reese

"That the children in this program would be made social outcasts by both teachers and for their friends they grew up with before they were placed in this V-K/P-1 class. Also thinking that once others had mentally placed these children in this class, they would always be thought of as the slow learning students. Also, that these children would never get the advantages of learning to work for goals set at the same levels for children at the same age. After being placed in V-K/P-1, these children are not expected to reach these goals. Therefore, they are not put under any pressure to see if they could possibly reach goals for their age. If they feel the teacher thinks they could do a particular problem, then they may try to do what is expected of them."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"Her peers neglecting her because she was in V-K or P-1. Age upon graduation. Was she handicapped?"

Corene Hughes

"My fears were almost the same as questions. Would she adjust to the drop back from first grade? Would this turn out to be just a year of play time?"

Kym Stouch

"I was fearful that if my child was misplaced into the V-K/P-1 program by mistake, could she be taken out of Pre-1st and put in 1st grade at a later date? Could one testing determine accurately whether my child should be in V-K/P-1?"

Name Withheld Upon Request

"I feared he wouldn't benefit from it and it would be all fun and games."

Cathy Witwer

"That she would be bored eventually in her incoming years. That she would feel different than others."

Joe and Maryann Oestreich

"I felt she would feel as if she had been left back a grade if she ever went to another school district because of her age."

Linda Weinhold

"None."

Andrea Konzelmann

"I felt he would excel in the classroom."

Name Withheld Upon Request

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- 9 -

WHAT EFFECT WILL AN EXTRA YEAR OF SCHOOL HAVE
ON MY CHILD?

Both parents and teachers report a high degree of success in students adjusting to later grades. The extra year of school will allow your child to better handle the physical, social, emotional and academic demands in school and in later life. This extra year can give the child the time and space his/her body needs to mature when it is ready, instead of when "others expect it to."

WILL Y-K/P-1 BE ALL PLAY AND NO LEARNING?

This is a common concern of parents and can best be answered by classroom observation. The classrooms are structured to challenge the specific abilities of individual students. In developmental classrooms, children do not "run wild" or "play all day." This classroom, as any other, has its rules and regulations and the children are expected to abide by them.

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT AGE UPON GRADUATION?

Your child will be one year older than he/she would have been without the program. Having had an extra year to mature, your child will be much better prepared to handle his/her entrance into adult life.

WILL MY CHILD BE ABLE TO PLAY SPORTS IN
HIGH SCHOOL OR WILL HE/SHE BE TOO OLD?

Students who have had an extra year in the early childhood program are eligible to play sports in each of their four years in high school. Although the usual cutoff is for students who are 20 before July 1, any student affected by the cutoff would be exempt from the cutoff date and would be able to participate in the sports program.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED GRADE SEQUENCE AS MY
CHILD PROGRESSES THROUGH THE PROGRAM?

Students in Y-K generally go into P-1 and students in O-K generally go into 1st grade. Once a child is placed at a particular level, the appropriateness of his/her placement is then determined by the teacher's evaluation of classroom performance. A recommendation for a child's movement to a different level can be made at any time during the year.

HOW WILL MY CHILD'S FRIENDS REACT TO
HIS/HER BEING A YEAR BEHIND THEM?

We have found that children in developmental classes will most often choose to play with children in their own class. Because these friends are of the same "body age," they will often have similar interests and physical capabilities.

- 11 -

HOW SHALL WE HANDLE PLACEMENT IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS SUNDAY SCHOOL, SCOUTS, ETC.?

Placement in Scouts is determined by age. Often Sunday School is divided according to grade. If your Sunday School has no P-1 level, you might want to discuss the problem with the person in charge. If you are forced to decide between K or 1st, the most logical choice would be the class whose members will eventually become your child's schoolmates.

WHY WAS MY CHILD PLACED IN Y-K JUST BECAUSE HE/SHE DREW A BELLY BUTTON ON THE TEST?

No one response or answer determined your child's score on the test. The trained examiners are looking for the pattern that develops not only in the child's work, but also in the way he/she responds.

HOW CAN ONE TEST SHOW ABSOLUTELY HOW MY CHILD IS GOING TO DO IN SCHOOL?

It can't. The Gesell test is used only as an initial screening device. Once the child has been assigned a classroom, the teacher then evaluates the child's performance. The performance may agree or disagree with the initial test placement.

WILL THE CHILD BE GETTING THE BASICS
THAT HE/SHE NEEDS FOR FIRST GRADE?

Academic skills are very much a part of the P-1 program. At the beginning of the year, a child's academic skills are assessed and the child is guided to move to higher levels as in any other grade.

WHAT WILL HE/SHE BE TAUGHT DIFFERENTLY?

The differences between the 1st grade and P-1 curriculums are based on the physical differences that exist between children in each of these levels. In the pre-first grade, children are taught with a high degree of sensory involvement--seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling. Movement is important because the large muscles of the body are still developing. Lessons are shorter in length to accommodate the children's attention span, and activities are varied in terms of grouping and room location.

WILL THERE BE ANY TRAUMA IN ADJUSTING?

Because the level is best suited for your child, the adjustment period is usually very short. Trauma in adjustment COULD occur when a child is overplaced and is struggling to keep up with the demands made upon him/her or when strong negative feelings about the child's placement have been voiced in front of the child.

ISN'T SCHOOL JUST LETTING THE CHILDREN
BE THE BOSS?

Rate of body development and not the child determines a child's placement in the program. As in any other classroom, the child is expected to comply with the established classroom rules and regulations that have been developed.

IF MY SON/DAUGHTER PROGRESSED ENOUGH,
WOULD HE/SHE BE PLACED IN REGULAR
KINDERGARTEN OR WILL HE/SHE JUST BE
FORGOTTEN?

Continuous evaluation of student performance is made with movement to a different level occurring at any time throughout the year.

WOULD NURSERY SCHOOL HAVE PREVENTED
MY CHILD'S PLACEMENT IN Y-K/P-1?

The Gesell Test assesses "body age" and the ability of the child's body to handle the demands at any specific level. Nursery school, although it may be helpful in social and academic development, cannot speed up or alter the inner timetable for a child's physical growth.

WHY CAN'T MY CHILD BE PUT INTO A
NORMAL CLASSROOM AND I CAN WORK
HARDER WITH HIM/HER AT HOME?

Unfortunately, what's being said here is that more pressure would be added to the pressure the child is already experiencing. The purpose of the program is to place the child in the most comfortable setting so that unnecessary stress and strain to perform can be eliminated.

Just imagine how you would feel if you were not keeping up with your job at work and the boss directed you to "practice" at home from 6:30 to 8:30 every evening so you would be better at the job the next day. What a thought!

IS THIS CLASS NORMAL OR WILL IT PUT
AN ABNORMAL TITLE ON MY CHILD?

The children in this program are perfectly normal children. Any labeling that may occur will be the result of persons who do not understand the program. You can help protect your child from this type of situation by discussing the program openly with those who may not understand.

HOW CAN I AVOID COMPARING THIS CHILD
WITH OTHER CHILDREN?

All children are different and we can expect them to be. In a competitive society, however, we often become uneasy when a child does not fit into a preconceived pattern that we may have developed. This is especially true once a child enters school. Breaking down those preconceived notions that develop from competition and enjoying the child for what he/she really is should be something for which every parent strives.

WHY WASN'T I MADE AWARE OF THIS PROGRAM IN MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, SCHOOL NEWSLETTERS, OR A LETTER FROM THE SCHOOL IN ADVANCE OF INSTITUTING THIS PROGRAM?

In the period of time the developmental program has been in ELANCO, the district has come to recognize the importance of communication. Now offering more ways for parents to become informed, the district begins by placing a notification for registration in local newspapers. After parents have called for an appointment, a letter is sent inviting them to meetings in which the program is explained by principals and specialists. Testing of children then takes place. In May there are follow-up meetings held to further explain the program, and any parent wishing to set up an individual conference can do so at that time.

WHAT DID I DO WRONG?

Absolutely nothing. It is often hard to realize this until all feelings of guilt, anger, embarrassment, disappointment, etc., have been pushed aside. It is only then that you can begin to view the program and your child from a more objective standpoint.

HOW CAN I EXPLAIN IT TO MY RELATIVES/FRIENDS?

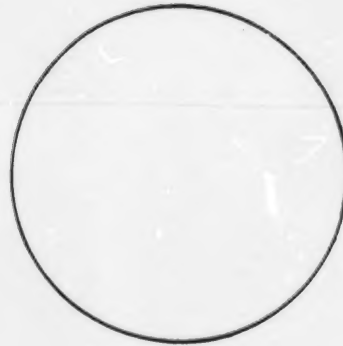
Exactly how to or what to say will vary with individuals. Success in explaining the program often requires a swallowing of pride and a determination to convey the many positive aspects of the program. The more comfortable you are with the program, the more comfortable others will be in discussing it with you.

DOES HE/SHE REALLY NEED THIS MUCH EXTRA HELP?

Yes. This gift--the gift of time--may be one of the most difficult, yet most beneficial gifts you could ever present your child.

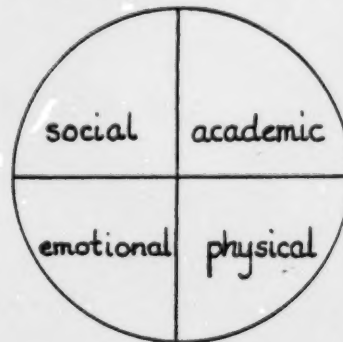
PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Each child comes to school with a limited amount of energy.

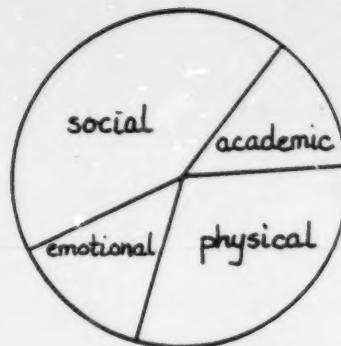
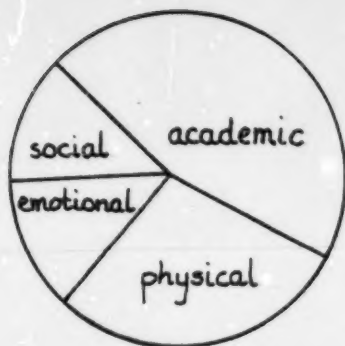


This energy must be divided between the four areas in which demands are made in the school setting: physical, social, academic, and emotional.

If a six-year-old child with a six-year-old body comes to first grade (the six-year-old program), the child is able to divide his energy rather evenly between these four areas.

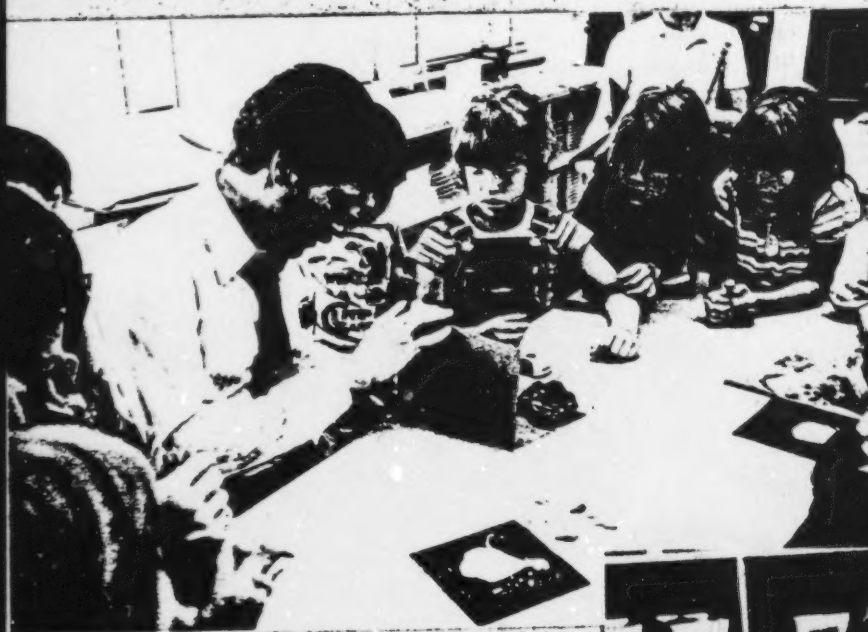


However, if a six-year-old child with a five/five-and-a-half-year-old body comes to first grade (the six-year-old program), the child must begin to make decisions about where to expend his/her energy, since there just isn't enough energy to go around. Thus, certain areas begin to suffer.



Skewed or uneven development results.

In our early childhood program, we are trying to prevent uneven development. It is our philosophy that each child's development should be an even and well-balanced progression that allows success socially, emotionally, physically and academically. Our program is structured to permit attainment of these goals.





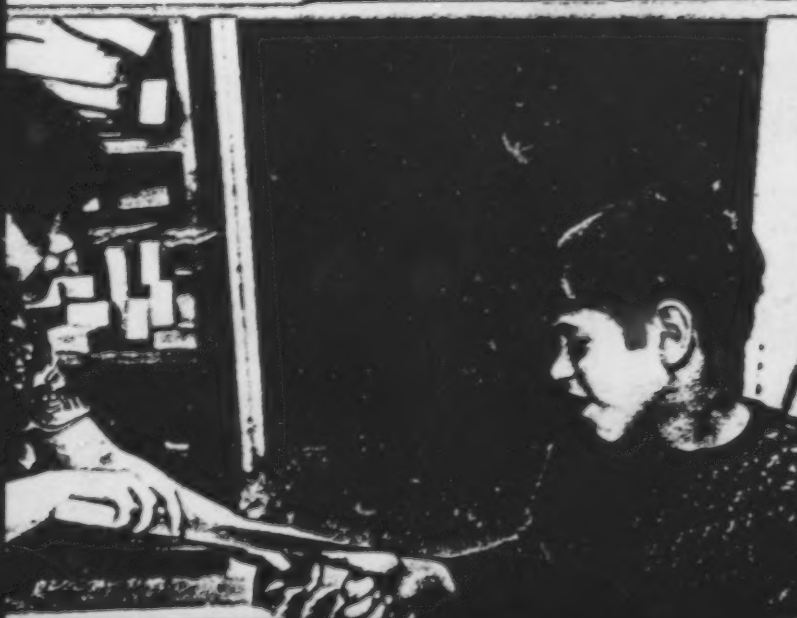
THE PROGRAM

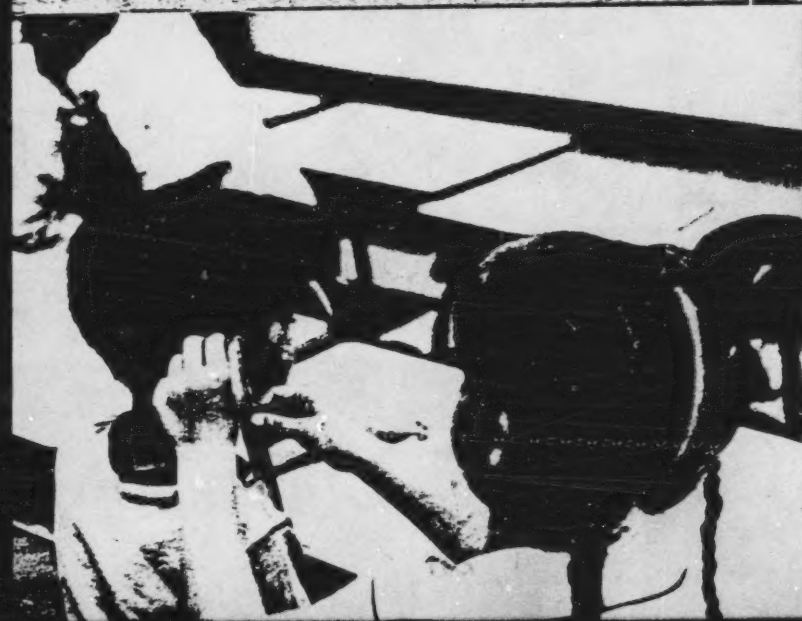
The P-1 program consists basically of five major areas: (1) social and emotional development, (2) work habits, (3) perceptual-motor skills, (4) reading readiness, and (5) math readiness. Social studies, science, health, safety, music, and art are taught in relation to these five major areas. At designated times throughout the week, specialists are scheduled to further develop skills in music, art and gym. The Title I aide works with the class in areas pinpointed through diagnostic tests administered at the beginning of the year.

Because our bodies are not physically ready to handle the demands of a first grade program, several accommodations need to be made. We experience a high level of sensory involvement in learning activities through seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling. Our activities are shorter in length, as well as more diversified in terms of grouping and room location. Working together to solve problems, we feel comfortable with routine and enjoy exploring materials at our own level without fear of failure. We are able to progress socially, emotionally, physically and academically as fast as we can without undue stress or strain to ourselves or to our bodies.

Typical Schedule

9:00-9:10.....Organization/Free Time
9:10-9:20.....Opening Exercises
9:20-10:00....Language Arts
10:00-10:30...Math
10:30-10:45...Recess
10:45-11:15...Perceptual-Motor Activities
11:15-11:45...Workjobs
11:45-12:30...Lunch/Recess
12:30-12:45...Sharing Period
12:45-1:00....Storytime
1:00-1:30.....Music
1:30-2:00.....Discovery Reading Program
2:00-2:15.....Recess
2:15-2:30.....Rest Time
2:30-3:15.....Activities from one or more of
the following: science, social
studies, math, reading, art,
music, motor skills, perception
3:15-3:30.....Clean-up, Mail, Dismissal





WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST PROBLEM IN ADJUSTING TO THE Y-K/P-1 ASSIGNMENT?

"I think everyone believes that maybe their child really didn't belong in it. Also wondering if maybe we, as parents, didn't help them enough at home--that they needed the extra help."

Linda Weinhold

"None"

Name Withheld Upon Request

"Not understanding the purposes and benefits of the program."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"Understanding what it was really all about and how it was going to affect her future."

Corene Hughes

"My biggest problem was dealing with my feelings and setting myself straight. Dustin had no problem at all because I did not let him know I was having a problem. Once he started school and I saw how great he did, my problems vanished and I only had to encourage him and be interested in what he was doing."

Katharine Martin

"I really didn't have any. I could see that he did need extra help in learning."

Cathy Witwer

"I think for me personally it was telling her grandparents why she was put there. Also explaining it to friends outside our district. It does get easier."

Jean Reese

"The labeling done by both adults and children, which still occurs to this day."

Joe and Maryann Oestreich

"Adjusting to the statment that each student is an individual...."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"Telling people who ask what grade my daughter is in and having to explain what P-1 is."

Kym Stouch

"Placing the blame--Who did what wrong? Parents--family--school--teacher? Me?"

Pat Dero

DID YOUR FEELINGS CHANGE AFTER YOUR CHILD COMPLETED THE PROGRAM? HOW?

"Yes. I could see that she was happy and comfortable in the program and that she liked and enjoyed school."

Jean Reese

"Yes. Attendance at the Coffee Klatches was a very fine program. I urged many people with unhealthy attitudes to attend. My child is more sure of herself. She has the patience to think through and complete a problem whether it's school work or some home learning. She's more aggressive and quite eager to learn."

Corene Hughes

"Yes. I could see how much he developed and he had more control of his patience to sit down and try to write letters and color."

Cathy Witwer

"Yes and No. I was surprised he didn't go immediately to grade 1 as he was in the top of his V-K class. Many of the things he learned that year, he already knew at home previously. He was also accustomed to playing with many children of various ages previously."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"Yes. I felt that this program was even more beneficial than I thought."

Andrea Konzelmann

"Yes, I do feel the program helped her. It was worked that they had shorter work periods and more activities to keep them occupied while learning. They got the little bit of extra time and help they needed before first grade and they all seemed to adjust well no matter what their ages."

Linda Weinhold

"Yes. There was definitely structure. There is a lot to be taught and a lot to learn. The children weren't babied! The realization that the kids do certainly grow differently not only healthwise, but academically. The children in the class are very intelligent, too! The children are accepted on their own level and are not forced to do what they can't or be what they aren't."

Pat Dero

"Some. Seeing that each teacher does give every student a point of learning they feel this student could achieve, then working with the student and giving the student ample time to reach the goal set for him or her."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"Yes. My feelings did change a lot for the better as I saw how my child progressed and did well in school."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"Yes. I could see her becoming more relaxed and interested in school work. I was very glad to have put her in P-1. I have explained it to many people and have had several mothers with older children who have said they wished they would have had the opportunity to send their child because without the extra help they fall farther and farther behind in school."

Kym Stouch

"Yes. We realized that the other grades are pushed on a little faster.....; therefore, it is almost necessary for one extra grade."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"Yes. We realized that she is now comfortable in her classroom both academically and socially."

Joe and Maryann Oestreich

"Yes. In the past 2 years, I have seen tremendous growth in Dustin. He has come out of his shell and shows leadership qualities. He is friends with about everyone in his class. He has had perfect attendance in those two years mainly because he has been eager to learn and has always looked forward to the following day. I think this is one of the best programs Eastern Lancaster County could start. The child moves at his or her own speed without being pushed or put under pressure. I am now looking forward to Dwayne being in this program--with no fears or questions at all."

Katharine Martin

WHAT KIND OF ADJUSTMENT HAS YOUR CHILD MADE IN FIRST AND SECOND GRADE?

"...she now realizes that school is for learning and learning can be fun."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"She seems comfortable and content."

Joe and Maryann Oestreich

"Excellent."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"Eric has found that school is not a game and that rules must be followed."

Andrea Konzelmann

"He adjusted fine in all areas. As I said before, he was in top reading groups and got A's and B's in grade 1 and grade 2."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"I haven't see any differences in the children coming from kindergarten and pre-first grade. As the children come into first grade, they merge together as one group. The children who have gone through the V-K/P-1 program do not stand out or feel a stigma socially, emotionally, academically or physically."

Julia Yoder
First Grade Teacher

"I have developed a great deal of respect for the early childhood program because of the children's ability to deal with potentially frustrating areas of the second grade curriculum." (cursive writing, reading)

"The early childhood program has enabled the vast majority of students I see to attain a 2nd grade or higher level in reading."

"I have found that increased maturity on the part of my children has enabled me to include small group activities in the classroom." "...this has given me the opportunity to spend 10 or 15 minutes of time to work individually with children."

"Socially, children play together more quietly and with fewer arguments than previously."

"Age or size of the children who have moved through the program has not been a problem..."

"Those children who have experienced the early childhood program have been given the chance to grow physically, emotionally, and socially, and can successfully take their places as contributing members of the second grade class."

Donna Stauffer
Second Grade Teacher

HOW HAS THE Y K/P-1 PROGRAM BENEFITED YOUR CHILD?

"I feel it has prepared him well for 1st grade and has taught him a lot."

Cathy Witwer

"She has learned to print letters and take more of an interest in books. She can do first grade work."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"I feel the Y-K/P-1 program has benefited my child tremendously. Had she been deprived of this program, she probably would have been a poor student and ended up possibly hating school. Instead, she loves school and is a good student."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"She has had an additional year to mature and become adjusted to school life."

Joe and Maryann Oestreich

"The extra year allowed my sons to mature. Michael gained confidence that he needed in himself. They have a good attitude towards school and hopefully will continue through 12th grade..."

Andrea Konzelmann

"I think it does help them settle down to learning not all playing. She has learned her alphabet, numbers, sounds, etc., that she was having slight problems with. It gave her the little extra time to catch up with the others."

Linda Weinhold

"Her confidence is better and also her independence is improving."

Jean Reese

"1. He has been able to stay in the top half of his class with no struggle at all.

2. He has matured in the fact he will go to someone else's house without mommy or daddy and stay overnight without any fears.

3. This program has given him a good foundation on which to build his future school years. He has grown on his own with no pressure applied and we are amazed at all he has learned and remembered in two short years.

4. He feels good about himself and is proud of all he has learned."

Katharine Martin

"They are happy at school, very eager to accept first grade. It gave them a sense of self-respect. They learned to get along with different kinds of people, solve their own problems. They gathered a wealth of knowledge about their bodies, nutrition, plants, pollution, etc. They learned to be proud of themselves and of what they can do."

Pat Dero

"It has given her more self-esteem and confidence in herself. It has also given her the time to grow into the work she will have to do in the successive grades."

Corene Hughes

"She does seem more comfortable at reaching goals set before her. She has also accepted that she is only expected to do her best and not to get too upset if she makes any mistakes."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"He enjoyed school so much more in P-1."

"P-1 was great and the P-1 year was certainly worth it."

"In grade 1 and 2, he was in the top of his class and always in the top reading groups."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"At the beginning of the year, my daughter had no interest in anything concerning school work. She now colors and looks at books and "reads" me the picture stories. I feel she has a good background for starting first grade. Rather than being frustrated with all the new learning, I think she will look forward to it. She's learned a teacher is a good friend and not someone who is constantly demanding her to do things she can't cope with."

Kym Stouch

COMMUNICATION

Because parents, as well as teachers, are in the business of education, communication between teacher and parents, is most invaluable. The establishment of open communication channels ensures a more thorough and comprehensive understanding of each child both at home and at school. Throughout the school year, numerous and varied opportunities for such communication are available.

Conferences--Twice a year, conferences are held (October/November and March/April). During each 15 minute appointment, child performance and progress are discussed by parents and teacher.

Report Cards (See Appendix II.)--Report cards are issued twice a year (January and June). Each child's school performance is evaluated in the areas of social and emotional development, work habits, reading readiness, motor and perceptual skills, and math readiness. A parent response form is included in the January report so that questions or comments can be conveyed to the teacher.

Observation--Parents are always welcome to observe the classroom in operation. Through firsthand observation, parents are able to develop a fuller understanding of the P-1 curriculum. When visiting the classroom, each parent is presented with an observation guide, which explains the class activities and the objectives of the lessons in progress. (See Appendix III.)

Newsletter--Each month the "PRE-FIRST NEWSLETTER" is printed and sent home with students. (See Appendix IV.) Various issues include class information, special projects and events, pertinent parent information, "Do-Together" projects and "Talk-Together" pages. Communication between parent and child is encouraged.

Coffee Klatches--At the beginning of each year, parental interest in coffee klatches is assessed through the use of questionnaires. (See Appendix V.) Evening meetings are then planned around the most popular topics, and resource people are invited to give presentations on the topics scheduled. "The Pre-First Program--Questions, Answers and Concerns" has proven to be a very popular meeting with former pre-first parents coming back to share their feelings before, during and after their child's placement in the early childhood program.

Parents' Exhibit--At the end of the year, a Parents' Exhibit is held. Beginning with an observation of the class's daily routine, the exhibit continues in the gym, where student projects have been displayed. After a slide presentation of the year's activities, a short performance is given by the students.

Parents' Hotline--A "Parents' Hotline" has been established to answer any questions you may have about the early childhood program. Below you will find the names and numbers of those willing to discuss the program. Feel free to call them to discuss your questions and concerns.

Pat Dero.....	273-2308
Corene Hughes.....	445-5082
Katharine Martin.....	286-5420
Mary Petrofske.....	286-9761
Jean Reese.....	445-7383
Kym and Gary Stouch.....	286-0131
Kathleen Hood (teacher).....	286-5290
	445-6517 (school)

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE PARENTS OF Y-K/P-1 CHILDREN?

"After having a child in this program, I feel that if most parents are willing to work with their children at a level the child is able to learn, then a lot of pressures and tensions are removed from both parties. Also, the parents allow their children to make mistakes and also help them see (without punishment or pressure) why a problem or situation was wrong, the child is more comfortable."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"To scrutinize their own individual situation and the child's and honestly discuss the benefits or problems with the program. Don't feel as if you child has "failed" or that you as parents have "failed."

Joe and Maryann Oestreich

"I feel that my sons needed the time to mature. Michael needed to find self-confidence and did so by not facing a lot of pressure that he was not ready to meet. I feel that children today face a lot of peer pressure as well as pressure from their parents. Michael has found school desirable instead of dreading going to school because he could attain goals for himself at a pace he was ready to meet."

Andrea Konzelmann

"Be patient. Go to the classroom and observe and participate with school activities. Help your child at home when he asks questions. Show an interest in your child. As with everything else, attitude is important."

Name Withheld Upon Request

1. Think positive about the program.
2. The excellent results will come.
3. So be patient and look for them (results).
4. Ask questions about the program and you'll learn it's very beneficial and important for the proper education of your child."

Name Withheld Upon Request

"To try to accept it because when they have finished the program they will be pleased with the results."

Cathy Witwer

"I would like to add that I don't feel the program would have been nearly as successful without a dedicated teacher...I feel a child's first teacher is important because she lays the groundwork for their feelings toward school. If they have a teacher who can show them that learning is fun and exciting, then this will help them as they go on. I am very glad that we chose pre-first. It was a very difficult decision, but I have no doubts that it was a correct one."

Kym Stouch

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I
CAERNARVON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
EASTERN LANCASTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
R.D. #3, BOX 151, NARVON, PA 17555

June 4, 1982

Dear Parent,

As a teacher in the early childhood program I have found the Y-K/P-1 concept is often a difficult one to understand for parents of children who have never gone through the program. Because I feel so strongly about the positive benefits of the program, I am undertaking the task of preparing a booklet entitled, By Parents For Parents. This booklet, which would be published for parents of children entering Caernarvon's pre-first grade, would address many of the same questions and concerns you may have had before your child completed the program.

Those who can best explain the program are parents of children who have actually experienced Y-K/P-1. For this reason, I am writing to you. I would greatly appreciate your taking a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire and returning it by Friday, June 18. Your time and honesty will be greatly appreciated by both me and the parents of future Y-K/P-1 students.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hood

Kathleen Hood
Caernarvon Pre-First Teacher

cas

Caernarvon Elementary School
R. R. #3, Box 151
Narvon, PA 17555



"By Parents for Parents" Project
Caernarvon Elementary School
R.R. #3, Box 151
Narvon, Pa. 17555

1. What was your initial reaction to your child being assigned to Y-K/P-1?
2. What questions did you have about the program before your child began?
3. What fears did you have about the program before your child began?
4. Did your feelings change after your child completed the program? _____ How?
5. What was your biggest problem in adjusting to the Y-K/P-1 assignment?

6. How has the Y-K/P-1 program benefited your child?

Former P-1 parents only.

7. What kind of adjustment has your child made in first and second grade?

8. What advice would you give parents of Y-K/P-1 children?

_____ I would like to share my responses with other parents.

_____ I would like to share my responses, but please withhold my name.

_____ I prefer not to share my responses with other parents.

Parent's Signature

_____ Check here if interested in working on a committee to publish the booklet, By Parents For Parents.

APPENDIX II

EASTERN LANCASTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
New Holland, Pennsylvania 17557

PRE-FIRST REPORT CARD

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

SCHOOL: _____ TEACHER: _____

The purpose of this form is to give you a written record of your child's progress.
In January, only, you are asked to sign the attached form and return it to school
with any comments you might have.

I. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

II. WORK HABITS:

III. READING READINESS:

IV. MOTOR AND PERCEPTUAL SKILLS:

V. MATH READINESS:

VI. GENERAL COMMENTS:

- 40 -

Your child is assigned to: _____

OBSERVATION GUIDE

(A.M.)

Opening Exercises

Oral language development
 Vocabulary expansion
 Social studies - patriotism, flag, states
 Auditory memory - pledge, song

Calendar

Visual discrimination and memory
 Measurement - day, month, year
 Recognition and sequence of days and months
 Number recognition and sequencing 1-31
 Alphabet recognition
 Social studies - holidays, customs, birthdays
 One-to one correspondence

Weather Chart

Vocabulary development - foggy, dew, frost,
 forecast, etc.
 Interpreting symbols
 Science principles

"News" - Language Experience

Reading skills - "Reading is talk written down."
 Sight vocabulary
 Oral expression and vocabulary development
 Visual and auditory discrimination/memory
 Listening comprehension
 Beginning/ending consonants and rhyming
 Alphabet skills
 Punctuation
 Attention span

Songs

Auditory memory and discrimination
Rhythm
Gross motor skills and coordination
Distinguishing between left-right
Following oral directions
Working together as a group

Sharing Period

Vocabulary development
Responding in question/answer form
Self-expression
Ease in speaking before a group
Attention span
Listening skills and comprehension

Specific Planned Activities

Objectives vary with lessons planned.

Workjobs

Independent work
Problem solving
Creativity
Self-control
Sharing and cooperation
Responsibility
Organization of work
Motor skills
Skills to be developed depend upon

44 current Workjob materials example:
Language Master, auditory skills, word recognition

OBSERVATION RESPONSE FORM

I found this guide _____ very helpful
_____ somewhat helpful
_____ not helpful

The part of the observation with which
I was most impressed: _____

- least impressed: _____

Questions: _____

APPENDIX IV

EE**ANGELA**ANN MARIE**BARBARA**BRIAN**CHAD**CRAIG**CRYSTAL**DANI**DARLA**DAVID**DUSTIN**MARY**
 NIFER**NORMA**PATTY**RACHEL**RHONDA**TAMMY**WENDY**ANGELA**BARBARA**CHAD**CRYSTAL**DANI**DAVID**
 Y**JENNIFER**RACHEL**TAMMY**WENDY**RHONDA**PATTY**NORMA**DUSTIN**DARLA**CRYSTAL**CHAD**BARBARA**
 ELA**AIMEE**ANN MARIE**BRIAN**CRAIG**DANI**DAVID**JENNIFER** NORMA**PATTY**RACHEL**TAMMY**WENDY**
 DA**RACHEL**JENNIFER** PATTI**MARY**AIMEE** ANGELA**BARBARA**BRIAN**
 MARIE**DUSTIN** *CRYSTAL* DANI**DARLA**TAMMY
 IG**CHAD** DARLA**DAVID**
 TIN**MARY** AIMEE**PATTY**
 BARBARA** JENNIFER**
 MARIE** *CRAIG**MARY
 TIN**MARY CRYSTAL**BRI
 DY**DARLA* AIMEE**ANGEL
 BARA**ANN MARIE**CHAD**
 IG**DANI** DARLA**DAVID**
 TIN**JENNIFER NORMA**PATTY**
 HEL***RHONDA** TAMMY**WENDY**CHA
 EEE**ANGELA**ANN MARIE**BARBARA**
 AN**CRAIG**CRYSTAL CHAD**DANI**DARLA**
 VID**DUSTIN**RACHEL** RHONDA**JENNIFER**CHAD
 RMA**MARY**PATTY**DANI* CRYSTAL**DAVID**DUSTIN**
 UNIFER**RHONDA**TAMMY**CHAD DAVID**NORMA**MARY**AIMEE
 BELA**ANGELA**ANN MARIE**DANI BRIAN**CHAD**CRAIG**CRYSTAL
 NI**DARLA**DAVID**DUSTIN**NORMA MARY**PATTY**RACHEL**RHONDA**
 AMY**WENDY**AIMEE**ANGELA**BARBARA ANN MARIE**BRIAN**CHAD**CRAIG**
 YSTAL**DANI**DARLA**DAVID**DUSTIN** JENNIFER**NORMA**MARY**PATTY**DAN
 CHEL**RHONDA**TAMMY**WENDY**AIMEE**ANN MARIE**BARBARA**BRIAN**CHAD**CRAIG**
 YSTAL**DANI**DARLA**DAVID**DUSTIN**JENNIFER NORMA**MARY**PATTY**RACHEL**RHONDA**CHAD
 MMY**WENDY**AIMEE**ANGELA**ANN MARIE**BARBARA BRIAN**CHAD**CRAIG**CRYSTAL**DANI**DARLA**
 VID**DUSTIN**JENNIFER**NORMA**MARY**PATTY**RACHEL* RHONDA**TAMMY**WENDY**AIMEE**ANGELA**ANN MAR
 RBARA**BRIAN**CHAD**CRAIG**CRYSTAL**DANI**DARLA**DAVID**DUSTIN**JENNIFER**NORMA**MARY**PATTY**DAN
 CHEL**RHONDA**TAMMY**WENDY**AIMEE**ANGELA**ANN MARIE**BARBARA**BRIAN**CHAD**CRAIG**CRYSTAL**DANI

Dear Parents,

As we continue our work on our winter unit, we will be concentrating on the themes hygiene, shadows, and holidays during the month of February. For Valentine's Day we will be making Valentine boxes for the cards our classmates may wish to exchange. These boxes will be made of tissue boxes. If there are any empty tissue boxes around your house, we would appreciate your sending them to school by this Friday, February 5th.

A special treat is in store for our class on Friday, February 5th. On that day, we will be attending Garden Spot High School's performance of Sleeping Beauty. We will be leaving Caernarvon at about 9:30 a.m. and returning before noon. Lunch will be handled in the regular manner and no spending money will be necessary for this trip.

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, February 23 at 7:30 p.m. On that evening we will be having our Coffee Klatch on Discipline. A representative from the Y.M.C.A. will be conducting a mini-workshop for parents on our theme, discipline. This promises to be a most worthwhile and meaningful session. We hope you will be able to attend!

Finally, a word about school papers and projects. At the end of the year, our class will be hosting an exhibit of our very best work completed throughout the year. If your child has several papers or projects of which he or she is especially proud, please put them in a safe place so they can be returned to school for our end-of-the-year exhibit. Specifics such as date, time and planned agenda will follow.

Included with this month's newsletter is a list of helpful ideas for dealing with a sick child. These ideas, which should make your job easier during the winter season, have been taken from Best Practical Parenting Tips by Vicki Jansky and published by Gryphon House, Incorporated, Mt. Rainier, Maryland 20822 (\$3.95).

"Sometimes just a little attention to sickroom logistics can make the care of a sick child much easier. For instance:

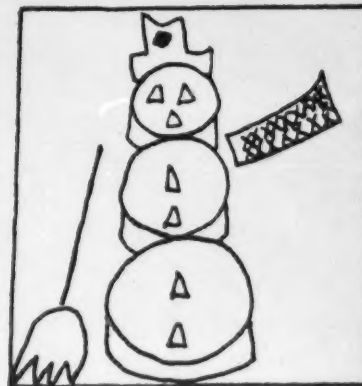
*Keep medications, paper cups, and other sickroom supplies in a container, such as a shoe box or breadpan to save running from room to room.

- *Or use a lazy susan for easy access to bedside supplies.
- *Keep a bell or whistle near a child's bed so that he can summon help when it's needed. (But tell your child to use it just once or twice--not continually!)
- *Make a table over a child's bed by using an adjustable ironing board, a card table with two legs folded up or a big cardboard box cut out to fit over the child's legs.
- *Let a sick child lie on an adjustable chaise lounge from your outdoor furniture set. It allows for a variety of positions and saves continual propping.
- *Use a parent's old t-shirt as a sick gown for a child with chicken pox, a rash, poison ivy or any eruptions that require lotion. Shirt won't bind and the lotion won't stain bedding or furniture.
- *Serve tray meals with a damp paper towel under the dishes to prevent them from slipping. The towel can be used to clean the patient's hands after eating.
- *Cover the top blanket with a sheet that can be changed if food or liquid is spilled on it.
- *Spend 10 minutes of each hour with the child using a timer to make it official.
- *Give a child a clipboard to hold drawing paper and tie a felt tip marker to the board. Or put crayons and other supplies in a covered cake pan and let the top serve as a lap table."

TALK-TOGETHER PAGE

FROSTY THE SNOWMAN

On Thursday, you went to Mrs. Kessler's room to help with a project. Tell me what you did.



BEGINNING SOUNDS

Mark the pictures that show words with the same beginning sound as BABY.



ESKIMOS

How are an eskimo's clothes different from yours? How are his clothes like yours?

Point to his parka.

Point to his ruff.

Point to his mukluks.



EQUAL/NOT EQUAL

Fill in the blanks with = or $\neq$.

7 --- 7

3 --- 9

49 11 --- 11

1 --- 6

If you were the parent of a pre-first child at Caernarvon next year, would you enjoy getting together with other parents of children within the class for informal discussion meetings?

— yes — no

When would you prefer these gatherings be held?

— over lunch hours

— after school

— in evenings

How often would you enjoy meeting?

— once a month

— once every two months

— twice during school year

— other _____

Where would you enjoy meeting?

— in classroom

— in school library

— in home of one of our parents

Would you be willing to host such a meeting in your home?

— yes — no

Would you enjoy having parents of former Caernarvon pre-first students attend our discussions?

— yes — no



PRE-FIRST COFFEE KLATCHES

Parent Coffee Klatches will be held in our classroom four times this year. The first meeting will be held in October. (You will be notified of the date later.)

Below is a list of possible themes for our Coffee Klatches. Please indicate your interests by numbering the topics from 1-8. (1 → topic of most interest, etc.)

cut and return

- _____ Reading for Young Children
- _____ Discipline
- _____ Nutrition
- _____ Pre-First Program-Questions and Answers
- _____ Materials-Making for the Classroom
- _____ Concerns of a Pre-First Parent
- _____ Activities For Learning in the Home
- _____ Communicating With Children 51

BIBLIOGRAPHY
AND
PARENTS' REFERENCE LIST

There have been many publications about learning and early childhood development. While no one book has all the answers, we share the following list of books available in the hope they will provide some useful information and expand one's knowledge of learning differences.

BOOKS

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- Gordon, T. P.E.T.--Parent Effectiveness Training. New York: New American Library, 1970.

PAMPHLETS

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(Most of the above literature is available at the public library and in some instances, at the school libraries.)